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CANADIAN

VETULIA:

OR,

Going to the Bottom of Things.

By WILLIAM WYE SMITH,

NEWMARKET, ONT.

TORONTO:

DODD & BURN, 11 COLBORN STREET,

1891.

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PREFACE.

THE "First Visit to Vetulia" was published in the *New Dominion Monthly* in 1875. A "Second Visit" was afterwards added, and the whole was printed in 1880 in the *Advertiser*, London, Ont. As it had become the literary property of those periodicals, it is now reproduced with their kind permission, revised, and in some parts, re-written. I make no apology for the radical utterances contained in it, nor is it necessary to say whether I believe them all myself. I want to get people into the way of "going to the bottom of things," and discussing first principles for themselves. In going over this work again I have been reminded at times of Bellamy and his "Looking Backward." All I can say is, that though Bellamy may have taken from me, I have not taken from Bellamy. Before it was published in the London *Advertiser* I sent the MS. to an old friend in London, Eng., asking him to negotiate with one of the magazines. After taking some preliminary trouble, he suddenly sent it back without a word of explanation, terrified, probably, at the "radical and revolutionary" nature of the book. This much by way of introduction.

W. W. S.

1891

Jan 1st

Feb 1st

Mar 1st

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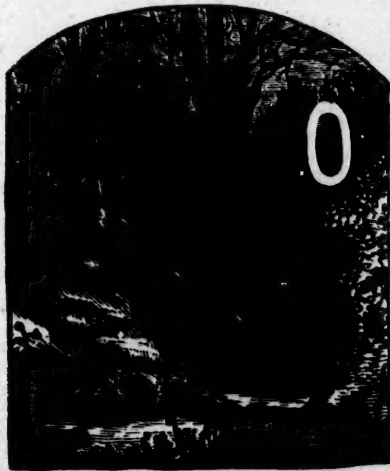
VETULIA :

OR, GOING TO THE BOTTOM OF THINGS.

—
BY REV. WILLIAM WYE SMITH.

—
CHAPTER I.

VETULIA, THE COUNTRY OF "THE VETERANS"—BE-
COMING NATURALIZED—THE DOCTOR AND HIS
ANCIENTS.



—
NCE in my trav-
els, I visited a
country where
people did not die
when they became
old. In fact, they
did not die at all,
except by those
violent accidents
and mishaps
against which flesh
and blood can offer

no effectual resistance. Being always of an in-
vestigating turn of mind, I resolved to make a
lengthened sojourn in such a favored land, and
find out how the inhabitants could have arrived
at such an unusual exemption from ordinary mor-

tality. Nor did I despair of being able to carry back with me from these less known regions, the *modus operandi* of bilking the grisly monster, Death. I found, however, unexpected difficulties in the way. In the first place, I had to undergo (when I applied for permission as a foreigner to remain in the country) a strict medical examination. "Ah," thought I, "they want to find out whether I am of a sufficiently good constitution, and in a sufficiently healthy habit of body, to make expedient so great a gift as quasi-citizenship in a country where people never die except they are *killed*!" But I was wrong. Though I took unusual pains to impress the medical officer that I was, in life-assurance phrase, a "first-class life"—that I had had measles and mumps and whooping-cough and had passed through each triumphantly—that I never had been sick, in a general and indefinite sense, but twice, and had then been cured on eclectic principles, and without calomel; and more important than all, had had the small-pox seven years before, which had passed off, leaving only a microscopic mark or two on my nose, and that I was quite pest-proof and rejuvenated—it was all of no use. In fact, I was standing in my own light. The worthy doctor, who was really my friend, and wished me to remain in the country, knew he was serving my interests and gratifying my desires by making me out as sickly as possible; while I thought the only way of obtaining the right of residence was in proving myself extremely healthy. So he reported me, "In moderate present health; forty years of age—

looks more ; lungs, not diseased, but weak ; general vital force of system, minimum to average ; bilious habit." I remembered that this was as near as possible the description given of me to the "Polar Life Assurance Company," when I applied for a policy ; and they (the rascals :) had only admitted me to the privilege of paying a semi-annual premium by calling me forty-three when I was only thirty-eight, and taking the extra amount out of my pocket.

The fact, as I soon learned it, was this : If I were a healthy man I might, even at the age of forty, come so much under the hygienic *regime* of their climate and their art as practically to live for ever ; and coming among them a stranger and without family connections, the care of my increasing old age would fall upon people who were not of my kin at all. But if I were "bilious" or "weak-lunged," they might hope (I wonder if they really did *hope* it ?) to be rid of me sometime, as ceaseless old age was not considered to be guaranteed to strangers. So the medical examination was considered to be in my favor, because my honest boast of good health was not believed !

There was still another difficulty. If I should bilk death for—it might be—only a century or two beyond *our* usual limits, there would be a helpless, and probably an impecunious old age for me. So I must give security that I should not be a burden on the public. My friend, the doctor, notwithstanding his report on my case, was willing to be my security for a hundred years from date ; but he hinted that I might not be able to

do much for myself after the age of one hundred and forty, and that "he had a large family to support," etc. I had read of a canny resident of Glasgow, who went back to ask if another year could not be added to the stipulated nine hundred and ninety-nine, in a certain ground-lease ; but I never before had heard of a man providing ways and means for his own support at the postponed distance of a hundred years ! This was, however, exactly my predicament.

After an infinite amount of trouble, and (I confess it with shame) the ostentatious exhibition of an apochryphal and very hollow *cough*, I got the required sureties for three centuries more ; but beyond this I found it impossible to proceed. It may be asked why I should put myself to all this trouble if I were desirous of staying only a few years in the country ? My answer is, that it was necessary to provide sureties in any event. And I had also an ulterior purpose in view : I would return in old age from my own country to this land where people did not die, for I, too, had the natural desire of a prolonged existence.

The necessary official *permit* was now obtained, and I began to make more extended observations of this wonderful country and this strange people. There were a great many problems unsolved, and theories unverified in my mind at that time ; indeed, there are a good many yet ; and one of them related to possible longevity. It always seemed to me a pity that when a man had just begun to tread the path of power and success in science, art or literature, he should drop away in death,

and leave all this mind-architecture unfinished. If a young man, a son or grandson of the veteran, could be *crammed*, so to speak, with the knowledge of the old man, and commence where the other leaves off, it would be as good as living two or three lives—as far as the interests of letters or art were concerned. But we never find such docility and such absorption. No such young men have been found. We ourselves were by no means such. But in this land a man could give thirty or forty years to maturing a science, and then have indefinite centuries to work out its results. Besides, say what we will, we have all something of self-love, if not ambition; and it was something for me to see men who had been celebrated as authors, wits or statesmen, two or three centuries before, in order to see how they wore their accumulated honors, and in what degree of personal veneration they were held. These problems, and a hundred more, I should now have the opportunity of solving, and I determined to take time enough to do it.

The first family I got thoroughly acquainted with, was that of my friend the doctor. His expression about “having a large family to support,” when I asked him to be my surety, had struck me at the time unfavorably. I thought it a mere *excuse* to evade an unpleasant act.

What was my surprise to find that, although he had but two children, of the respective ages of five and two, his family consisted, exclusive of servants, of no fewer than eighteen! The oldest person in his house was three hundred and forty years old—

a maternal male ancestor. This old gentleman had documents in his possession to prove that he had been a celebrated surgeon in his day—a wit and a man of fashion—he had fought a duel about a duchess—and been reckoned one of the handsomest men of his time. I was desirous of seeing him. The doctor did not accompany me to his room. He was seated in a low easy chair, in a dressing-gown of thick brown flannel ; his face and hands were walnut-colored, wrinkled beyond any power of adequate description. His skin, which seemed as dry as parchment, clung so fast to his bones, that the tendons seemed to have no room to act, and his joints were almost useless. It took him full thirty seconds to turn his head to an angle of about sixty degrees from his former position. His eyes were sunken in to the very rear of the cavity of the eyeball. I, who profess no knowledge of anatomy, was astonished at the depth to which they had sunken. The upper and lower eyelids had followed them, making a funnel, at the bottom of which two shrunken and bleary orbs looked out as from some interminable cavern. He had ceased reading for one hundred and fifty years ; his eyes no matter with what artificial aids, would serve him no longer. For more than that time he had been unable to walk ; not that he was really too weak, but his limbs were too rigid, and he had too little command over his joints. He was like a skeleton without the wires—ready to collapse in a moment. He could still talk ; but did so without moving his jaws. But as his pronunciation, even if distinct, was that of three centuries ago, it

was almost impossible to understand a single word. So difficult indeed was it, that the doctor had given orders to pay no attention to his mutterings, but to treat him as a child, keep him warm, his room clean, and give him plenty to eat and drink —“and that was all !” I looked at him, therefore, as I would at a curious wild beast. He said something which I could not understand. It seemed to be a *question*, from the tone with which it ended. I paid him a few compliments, speaking very slowly and distinctly, and bending down to his ear. He started : at least he *prepared* to start, but it took some time for the motion to develop. Then his hands slowly rose, with a motion as toilsome, apparently, as the minute-hand of a clock. I took his hand ; it was cold : at least it had that sensation to me, but it was also hard and dry ; the fleshy portions of his hand had shrunken away, and there the brown (almost black) skin stood in hard ridges really as hard as wood. Over the fingers the skin was smooth and shining ; the nails were long and pointed. The ancient scowled at me when I took his hand, and said something. I could not distinguish the language. He began with some shrill tones, and ended with a series of grunts. I looked with profound reverence and pity at the figure before me. “Is this,” I said, “what long life means ? for which we too often, and mistakenly pray ! Is it to linger on, vacant and useless, as in a miserable and endless dream ?” My sight grew dim and shadowy ; I was looking through the watery lens of a tear. His white beard was still whiter and longer ; his nose and

chin were yet more pointed, and his mouth and eyes still more sunken. His ears stood out yet farther, and his few white hairs were yet thinner and longer. He had now got me in the focus of his vision, and before that glance I felt like one who had violated the secrets of the dead. I bowed low to the *Atomy*, as I passed out of the room, and sought my own chamber at once.

CHAPTER II.

DEGREES OF OLD AGE — DEATH OF CHILDREN —
 LITERARY VETERANS — RUNAWAY GRANDFATHERS
 — THE EQUITABLE LIQUOR LAW.



THE doctor's mother was a fine bustling old body of sixty,—very charming manners, and full of anecdote and repartee. *Her* mother was ninety—a paralytic old lady who needed a good deal of attention, and got it. *Her* mother again, had been perhaps some-

thing of an old maid before entering matrimony, and was one hundred and thirty. Two generations even beyond this were represented in the doctor's household. No wonder he said "his family was large." I found among these venerable matrons—not only in this household, but also in others—that up to about the age of eighty, there was little decay of the faculties. From eighty to one hundred, they were more or less infirm. At one hundred and twenty, they were helpless, physically, but often with mental faculties very little

mpaired. From that onward, the process was so slow that it was difficult to assign dates. Just as it has been seen that a piece that was once a cultivated garden, will retain its fertility indefinitely, in the midst of surrounding barrenness and desolation, so I found that those who had cultivated their minds in youth, not only had a happier and more attractive old age, but retained their faculties far longest. A woman of fashion was imbecile at ninety, while a cultivated mind kept its possessor in a green old age to one hundred and twenty.

The old people, on the whole, were very kindly used. If a man ill-treated his father, he knew what was coming. He would be treated just so by his own son. One would think the Highland story was invented here—where a son cut a blanket in two, put half of it round his father's shoulders, and turned him from his door. Turning from watching the old man tottering down the glen, he found his own little son had folded up the other half-blanket, and was hiding it away. "What are you doing with that blanket?" "I am laying it away; and when *you* get to be an old man, I'm going to put it round *your* shoulders, and put *you* away, just as you did grandfather!" And the man ran after his father and brought him back. The "moral" of the story, at least, was certainly indigenous here.

I had been accustomed to think that one of the greatest trials of this life was the death of children: these little human blossoms, too early kissed by frost—but remembered evermore, with tenderest regrets. And I used to wonder how a mother,

so tender in her feelings, so loving and so gentle, could bear such sorrows at all—did not fly away at once, and seek the skies! I did not know it was the sorrow itself that *made* her so gentle and so loving! Well, here there was none of this sorrow, and I breathed freer when I thought of it. But there was *something wanting* in all the households of this land. It was not sweet and promising children; it was not care of them, nor affection among themselves; it was simply the angel-child was missing!—the one that comes in dreams, and never grows up, and never wanders from duty, and never is forgotten! There was nothing of this here; there was no “vacant chair” by the fireside—no shining lock of lint-white hair secretly unfolded every day, and hidden away in the bosom again when a footfall was heard; and human nature seemed to me to be just *so much the worse* for the lack! The people there did not agree with me; they said it was but sickly sentiment; but I knew it then to be true wisdom.

We have the germs of many faculties in us, which never come to much because we do not give them a chance to do so, or because we have not opportunity; and the unselfish faculties of pity, compassion and sympathy, depend entirely for their development, upon having a right field for exercise. With us these finer feelings are largely drawn out by having children around us, on whom to exercise them; and the gain to ourselves is one of the great “unknown quantities.” But in the country of which I speak, helpless old age

took the place of helpless infancy and youth ; and as the aged were querulous and unthankful and not unfrequently undeserving, it was hard to get up the feelings to the pitch of disinterested love toward them—except where they stood in the direct relation of parents. We find it easy to love the young, for we give them credit for all they *may* be ; but we sometimes find it hard to love the old, remembering what they *have* been. In consequence, I thought I detected a flavor of selfishness through the whole moral strata of society. They themselves disguised it under some high-sounding philosophic name, and knowing no other state of society, were unaware of its hatefulness.

In earlier life, I had often thought Fame was a fine thing. How charming the thought of one's name being remembered, and one's memory praised, for genius, patriotism, invention, public virtue ! And then, if such a thing could be, to come back, ages after, and listen to one's own praise ! Well, here seemed to be the country for it. Here were celebrated poets and statesmen, who did not need to die to attain a " posthumous " reputation ; they might have it, and enjoy it, while they yet lingered in Time. A few, a very few of them, were visited by admiring crowds of people ; but most of these visitors afterward confessed to a regret at having made such a pilgrimage. All romantic illusions were dispelled. The Lord Byron and Sir Philip Sidney of their dreams were helpless, withered, miserable specimens of attenuated humanity pitiful to behold. But those I most pitied, and tried

most (and with but moderate success) to comfort, were those who had—or fancied they had—been neglected by the public. They would descant on their own merits and “claims”; would have MS. volumes of poems beside them, written in some cramped chirography of centuries ago, which nobody could read; would have documents, and references, and “letters of introduction”; and only wanted a “disinterested friend,” to place them, even yet, in the position they ought to have occupied “ages” ago. I just had to treat these “twice children” as any other children: humor their whims a little, cheer them up with a little pleasant gossip, give them a bit of *candy*, and promise to see them again.

In that country, the test of a man’s governing faculties was not, “How does he rule his children?” but “How does he get on with his *ancients*?” and, just as with us, runaway boys frequently give grief to parents, so there, runaway fathers and grandfathers were continually being hunted up and brought home. Sometimes a man of ninety, and his grandfather of one hundred and fifty, would “run away,” and change their names, and pretend they were “orphans”—that is, that they had no descendants; and, after all kinds of adventures, get into distress and beg to be taken home again; or, confessing their real names, be forcibly conveyed to their relatives. It seemed irresistibly comic to me to read posters offering rewards for information concerning a “Runaway grandfather.” But it was necessary; for sometimes an *ancient* might bring his responsible guardian into debt on

his account, especially if the guardian were an opulent and honorable man, and therefore his ancestor allowed to run bills in his name. This question, however leads me toward the legal aspects of "Non-age" and "Deseoffment," which I must treat in a separate chapter.

At present, a word about physicians. I asked my friend the doctor if it "were not a poor country for a *doctor*?" "Oh no," he said; "he was very well satisfied with it. The households being very large, it had become a fixed custom for each to have a physician engaged by the year; and as the people were very greatly afraid of sickness, and arrant cowards with respect to pain, they made a liberal annual allowance to the doctor. His allowance *stopped* during sickness in the house, and so it was his interest to get the patient up as soon as possible. In real point of fact, there was very little sickness and very few accidents. Both had greatly decreased; the latter almost disappeared, since intoxicating liquor had been put an end to."

I enquired how this had been affected? He said it was a consequence of good legislation. Many years ago, a reforming Prime Minister had introduced the "Equitable Liquor Act." That had soon put an end to it.

I asked how this had been done; for in most countries all kinds of stringent license laws, and so forth, had been tried with little effect.

The doctor replied, "It came about in this way. The new law assumed that those who did not drink, and were opposed to tippling houses, ought

of right to be free from the burdens that drink had been bringing on the public. So every ratepayer, in filling up his assessment schedule, had to describe himself as being either for 'Liquor' or 'No Liquor.' Only those were counted to be 'No Liquor,' who distinctly said so. Having now the people divided into two classes, all the burdens—judicial, police, pauper, and all others—caused by drink, were assessed *against the drinking portion of the ratepayers*; the others were free of it. For it stood to reason, that those who upheld the practice of drink, should support also the *burdens* of drink. If any man, however, had returned himself 'No Liquor,' and then was seen to drink, his name was at once transferred at the Court of Revision, to the other list! In two or three years almost everybody returned himself as opposed to liquor. As soon as those thus opposed to liquor in any municipality were found to be a majority, all traffic in liquor was made unlawful in that place. In twenty years there was not a drop used in that country, and there has not been a drop since."

CHAPTER III.

DEFEOFFMENT — "BEGINNING LIFE" AGAIN—THE
TOLL-KEEPER—THE RIVAL STATESMEN.

N the rude ages of the country's history, before people had bethought them of written laws, things were allowed to go as they would, and a man might rule his household as long as he could get his sons to obey him. But the necessity for legislation came from the palace itself.

In rude times when a king was sure to be killed in battle as soon as his vigor and prowess decayed, no great inconvenience was felt from an indefinite reign. But in more civilized times, it became intolerable that a king should reign—or rather a junta of ministers in his name—after he had become entirely incapable of governing. So a law, which almost took a revolution to effect, was made that every man—king or citizen—on attaining the age of eighty, should retire from active business, legal ownership of property and the like, and hand everything over to his son. Some of the old men attempted to evade this law by making their wills, in which a nephew or grandson would be left the property. But another act was passed, providing for succession to property, and declaring the making of a will a misdemeanor. The preamble to this act recited that "each genera-

tion of men had a right to the full possession of the earth, as much as if men in their persons, had been newly created; that wills, bequests, entails, marriage settlements, and the like, are infringements of this right, as seeking to bind the present generation by the behest or will of some former generation." I like a preamble especially when it is a good one, and it encourages people to obey a law, when it gives a good reason for itself!

No sweeping laws were ever perfect at first, and these acts had to be modified, in as far as they fixed a definite age for veterans to retire from active duties. Some were unfit to longer manage their affairs at seventy; others were clear and bright for a century. A tribunal was established, the circuits of which extended to all county towns, and held twice a year, called the "Court of Defeoffments;" and old men were said to be "defeoffed" when they were set aside from ownership of property, and from the active duties of life. The judges were appointed at the age of thirty-five, and had to retire from the Bench at the age of forty-five. But in point of fact, they were generally appointed to vacancies in the Criminal Courts and Chancery. There was thus a court to judge the claims of old men, not itself composed of old men. Five judges sat on the bench. No jury.

In two or three times attending this court I was struck with the anxiety of the old men to show their unimpaired memory, by recounting circumstances of sixty, seventy or even eighty years ago. But the judges invariably tested them

on recent events, and therein many made a poor exhibit. Sons were not allowed to bring their fathers forward ; it was made the duty of a public officer,—though it may be suspected that an undutiful or selfish son sometimes drew the official's notice in the direction of his own household a few years sooner than might otherwise have been the case. I was sometimes very sorry to see these old men retiring from the court when the decree had gone against them, for they almost invariably contested it : in tears often, protesting against ingratitude and injustice ; for somehow it is hard for us to believe our faculties are in anywise failing ; at least in any measure making it necessary to supersede us. An old man would admit that his sight had failed ; his hearing, his memory, his back, his limbs, his personal courage—his everything, only his reason and judgment. These, he contested, were stronger and brighter than ever. But it was all in vain. "Each generation of men has a right to the full possession of the earth, and the management of its affairs," so said the wise Legislator of Vetulia ; and where men do not naturally make room for their successors by death, there must be room made for these, artificially, by legislation.

I was curious to know if the succession to the Crown came before the Court of Defeoffments. I was told it did not ; that it was not considered in accordance with public policy to have the Sovereign up before a Court. So an exception was made in his case, and a king was "retired" when he reached the age of eighty-five. But in point of fact, they frequently voluntarily retired before

that age, and, by doing so, always made better terms for themselves with the princes who succeeded them.

But although a man was retired, or "defeoffed," he could still, with the consent of his son, do business and act for himself. He was in precisely the same condition that a lad of non-age, a "minor," is with us. And so, many of these old men, coming back dispossessed from the Court, obtained leave to "begin the world" for themselves again; making a little money on their own account, just as boys are so keen to do among us, and even—boy like—delighting to jingle the money in their pockets as they went along! And, as with us, a young man, under age, is not allowed to contract marriage without the consent of his father, so there, an old man was not allowed to contract marriage without the consent of his son. A recent earthquake had swallowed up a number of villages, and there were more widows and widowers than had been known since the last great invasion of the country.

An old man of one hundred and five, who had lost his wife, and nearly all his property in the earthquake, and who had been defeoffed for fifteen years, and had been keeping a toll-gate, and had saved a little money, was anxious to "settle down in life" again. But his son (moved thereto by his wife) would not give consent, and the old man could not legally marry without such consent. The maiden lady of forty, whose prospects were thus interfered with, revenged herself by writing anonymous letters to the local newspaper, about

the "stinginess" and "ingratitude" of sons, and the old man stung the son to the quick by making him pay full toll at the gate. The son was a Director of the Road Company, and had been passing free (illegally, however,) for years. I thought I did a good turn to both sides, when I prevailed upon the son to give his consent. And the *ancient* was perfectly happy. *He* could be up at any hour in the morning (it seems no trouble for an old man to be up "for all day" at two or three o'clock), and *she* could sit up to any hour at night, writing love-stories for the papers. So between them, the gate did not need to be much locked !

Making war had long been upon the Statute Book as a deadly and disgraceful sin. Among other great evils (as of corrupting the public sentiment for a generation), it deprived families of their heads and guardians ; it disturbed the natural order of succession in families ; and even cases had been known of men carrying their ancestors to the woods, and leaving them a prey to wild beasts, and laying it all down to the "desolations of war." Yet, though war was among the things of bygone ages, a good deal of corruption had crept into the body politic. Old Atomies were sometimes *exposed* at some forest road-side. In other countries "foundling" infants are not uncommon ; here, "foundling" *ancients* were sometimes brought in. As they were always so old as not to be able to give account of themselves, they became inmates of the large asylum provided for those who had no known friends or home. I was told that one of

the greatest difficulties in the management of these wayward "children," was their antipathies and spites at one another. This was found mostly in private circles, not in the public institutions. For instance: the mothers of a runaway couple had severally vowed "never to speak" to one another, and kept their word for half a century. Then, in the course of events, that *do* become so involved sometimes, they became, at the age of nearly one hundred, members of the same household. To forbear speaking was too tame a system of hostilities, when now they sat in two easy chairs, on opposite sides of a foot-stove. I was told by the youngest member of the family (who ought not, however, to have let a stranger know these things), that "Great-grandmothers had a pitched battle *every day*!"

Two rival statesmen of the last century were accommodated in houses with only a few feet between their gable-ends. Here in the summer, with their windows open, these *ancients* might be seen and heard, speechifying to one another with might and main—thumping on the window-sills, and foaming at the mouth as they fiercely called each other to "order" and appealing to some imaginary "Speaker" to do them justice! One had a good set of artificial teeth, strongly set in gold, and could declaim with the perfect accent and pronunciation of near two hundred years ago. The other, who was entirely toothless, was strong on the *vowels*. The one supped soup, and the other ate brown bread; and I was told that their intellectual sparring gave them excellent appetites, and

tended to promote their health. I have learned to believe anything, however new and strange, if it is only convincingly attested.

My resolution was at last taken ; and I resolved to have my bonds cancelled, and get away as fast as I could from a country where people grew old, but never died. The romance of long life was gone. "Happier far," I said to myself, "to live in a land, where, when old age comes on, there is a prospect of quiet rest in the grave for the poor body, and a better life to begin for the tired spirit ! Better a country where children modestly and regretfully come into possession of estates through the lamented death of valued parents, rather than appeal to courts to have parents thrust aside ! Better, things as they are—with the liberty of making our administration of them better—than where neither parents nor children fulfil their duties aright. No, let me rather live to some purpose while I *do* live, and die when my work is done !" So I left Vetulia.

CHAPTER IV.

VETULIA REVISITED—PARLIAMENT—ENACTED “PRINCIPLES” — WOMEN VOTING — “VOTING” AND “SPEAKING” MEMBERS — OBLIGATIONS OF THE OPPOSITION.



LIKE many other men, I had been literary rather than political, for all the earlier part of my life; and though I had had many problems on various subjects before my sojourn in Vetulia, very few of these had been in anywise political. I had consequently paid less attention than under different circumstances I would have done to political matters when there. And this I came afterwards to regret, for it is one of the things we are slowest to learn, to let no opportunity slip of acquiring any knowledge whatever, that is innocent in itself. No sooner is the knowledge obtained than an opportunity for using it presents itself—an opportunity which was there before, but we did not see it! So, had I studied Vetulian politics when I was there, I should probably have been in Canadian public life long

before the period I now speak of. But having "entered political life" (as the candidates' phrase is), in my more mature years, and even achieved somewhat of a local celebrity, I thought I should exceedingly like to repeat my experiences in Vetulia; confining myself this time to matters I could think upon, and recommend to my own countrymen for thought; and pay less attention to "naturalization" or other matters that had formerly concerned me, in relation to my then proposed settling down in the country. It was several years however, before an opportunity arrived of putting my desire into action. In the meantime, however, I had been priming myself with *questions*, for the difference between one person learning much, and another person under the same circumstances learning *nothing*, is just that the one is anxious to know, and thus *asks*, and the other is indifferent, and learns nothing.

At length, by means of the newly-discovered "Central Strait," I made the City of Vetulia, the seaport and capital of the country; and was glad to find I was remembered, and courteously welcomed by my former friends. I say "friends," and yet some of them were gone—not into death, but into "defeciment"—"laid upon the shelf," so to speak—packed away in garrets like old lumber—dressed in brown flannel gowns, and long red nightcaps. Some who had been the wisest legislators, most gifted authors, and (I was proud to say) my warmest friends, were thus found by me on my second visit. It brought vividly to mind my former cogitations, "To be, or not to

be?" To be an old man in Vetulia, or an old man in my own country at home? Well, the question was settled now, and I cannot say I regretted the way I had settled it. I would live and die at home. I was asked, "If I had repented of my former resolution, and had come back to be naturalized?"

I said "No; I had come back to study their political institutions." I never knew before what a discovery was awaiting my researches in this particular. And, as I am down on all patent rights, and shall not even take out a copyright for "VETULIA," I give my discovery freely to my readers. It is this: If you want to be well-received in a town, go there to study their system of water-works, or their police, or their light, or to inspect their hospital arrangements, or their new school-buildings. Or, if you would be popular in a country, study their political institutions and their *code*. The same human feeling that makes a person feel flattered to be consulted with and copied, is found in the community and the nation. So when I told the Vetulians what I had come for—and especially with my former good reputation—I found it easy to obtain all the information I sought as to the working of their institutions.

I was profoundly struck with this—that every man seemed to consider himself privileged and bound to appeal to First Principles. And I do believe now, after long thinking it all over, that this principle in the mind of the Vetulians came largely from the influence of their legislation, act-

ing for many ages on the mind of an acute and reasoning people. Their statutes and public acts were all founded on reasons, and the reasons were *stated*. And a man called upon to shape his conduct in accordance with the laws, looked at those reasons ; and thus going back to First Principles with the legislators of his country, he became a judge of those first principles as well as they ; and the habit thus gradually formed became national and hereditary. I had, as I now fear, gone so far with the popular superstition that "everything is corrupt in politics," "one side is as bad as another," and "Politics are merely *expediency*," that I must have seemed to some of those incorruptible politicians as something worse than a mere learner—as one already wrongly taught.

I was informed that Parliament seldom passed laws. "What then," I cried, "are its functions? Do the members hunt, fish, and roam in pleasure parties over the earth? and only come together once a year to vote the supplies?" It was explained to me thus: "Parliament is considered to be, not only a representative of the people, but consisting itself of the best minds among the people. And as no improvement will ever take place unless somebody suggests it—and improvements *do* take place—it follows that some minds must be in advance of the general sentiment of the times. We think it better that Parliament should occupy that position, and lead the public mind ; rather than that the *literati* and the philosophers should lead Parliament. But, as it must have occurred to you, in your experience in life,

that the best way to lead others is to *lay your whole case* carefully before them—give them all your arguments and reasons—then give them time to act! so we think Parliament should go with easy steps—lay down general principles—give the good reasons that support them—and then wait till the country, having considered those reasons and principles, is prepared to adopt them. Then make the special application of those principles in specific enactments. But the fact is, that the enunciation of the ‘principle’ by Parliament is often enough. People don’t do what Parliament says ought not to be done, even if there is no command and no penalty. We have a multitude of laws, which have never been enacted by Parliament otherwise than in general principles; and yet have become—like your unwritten Common Law—a power in the land.”

The franchise was very liberal. The *principle* passed in Parliament was, “That all persons, old enough to be steady in their minds, and not so old as to be imbecile, and who were permanently resident, so as to share the good or evil produced by their vote, ought to have the privilege of the ballot.” This had been construed by the Courts, and by long usage, to include women as well as men; though it was well-known that the mover of the *principle* did not intend to give women the privilege of voting. And there was ferment in the public mind when the privilege was first claimed and exercised. But when it was found that, with few exceptions, the women all voted for *the best man*, without very much regard for his

party politics ; and could not be induced, on any consideration, to support a man who was morally unsound, the opposition gradually died away. Twenty-two had been fixed on as—on the whole—the earliest point at which a young man might be supposed to be settled in his mind, and have passed the Scylla and Charybdis of youthful passion ; and the earliest age at which a young woman may be supposed to be married, and able to think about something else than dress and bonnets. And as you cannot ensure “ permanent residence ” by projecting it into the future, you may make an approach toward ensuring it by demanding that it shall have already existed twelve months. Defeoffment by the courts carried with it extinction of the political franchise.

Parliament had also passed the *principle*, that “ Every class of citizens should be represented in the Legislature.” And a few years after applied it in a specific *Act*, that if a defeated candidate for Parliament polled ninety per cent. of his opponent’s vote *he* also should sit in Parliament ; but without the privilege of voting : could speak only. I was assured it had wrought very beneficially in two directions. First, it took away much of the acerbity formerly and generally found in election contests ; for if a candidate foresaw the probability of his opponent’s sitting opposite to him in the House, he would be more careful how he treated him on the hustings. And, second, the less successful candidates had a good chance to prove themselves, and show “ what was in them.” And they often showed themselves so wise and

excellent in their conduct in the House, that they afterward easily secured a constituency. And, if a man proved himself a fool, as a "speaking member," the public were always glad they had found him out; and took good care never to make him a "voting member."

This chapter, though necessary, is rather dry. I promise the reader something more entertaining in the next. But I must speak of one matter more. It had been a *principle*, ever since Parliament was first organized, in the reign of the great Thermacor, "That no one should object to anything, without proposing something better." In the course of ages it had wrought a silent and beneficent revolution in men's minds. For, the reader must know, these parliamentary *principles* were read in the text-books at school, and taught by mothers to their children at home; and thus became interwoven, as it were, into the mental and moral structure of the nation. I was asked how it was with us? if our school children read and recited *our* laws? Incautiously I said "Oh, no!" And then I was persecuted with the question, for which I could find no answer, "Why not? If the laws are good, and expressed in plain language, why should they not be studied and read in the schools? And if not good in principle and plain in language, *why not?*"

Now, the Opposition in Parliament were bound by this *principle* I have mentioned, as well as everybody else. So, in opposing any Government measure, the leaders of the Opposition were obliged to state the alternative measure they would pro-

pose ; and this was recorded in the journals of the house : and if, within five years after they came into power, they were by immemorial usage, bound to bring those measures forward, as Government *principles*.

I asked, " Why *five years*, neither more nor less ?" The answer was, that a man was not to be bound forever by opinions at one time expressed ; for there could be no improvement if no one was ever allowed to change his mind. And anything less than five years would allow the party who happened to be in Opposition, to play " fast and loose " with their professed principles ; and encourage a factious opposition, for the mere purpose of opposition. I passed a sleepless night, after my interview with the Premier, and he had given me all these particulars. I am glad I put them down at the time, or I certainly should have forgotten some of them. And I cannot say all these *principles* are properly digested in my mind yet ! But, like a merchant from afar, I bring them home with me, and dispose of them to him who will give them room !

CHAPTER V.

JUVENESCO ISLAND—OLD MEN GROWING YOUNG—
THE "MAN" IS FATHER TO THE "BOY"—A CUT-
THROAT GROWN YOUNG—OLD MAIDS REJUVENATED.



HAVING arisen with a headache (for the third time only in my life), after tossing about bound (in my dreams) hand and foot, then rolled down huge precipices, and at last quartered and dissected, by all these multitudinous and sharp-edged *Principles*, I determined to consult my pleasure for a few days, and let study alone. My good friend Dr. Oko would accompany me; and we would take a cruise to "The Islands." Two days' sailing over the Level Sea—for such was the name of the vast arm of the ocean we traversed—brought us to Nesco Island. Here the air and scenery were quite different from Vetulia. As with King Duncan, "The air niably and sweetly recommended itself" to me. Everything seemed different: and I was not therefore surprised to hear that everything *was* different from Vetulia. *There*, people went on to infinity, getting continually older; *here*, they became continually younger! I was told they issued from dark caves in the mountains that formed the interior of the island; that they were very old and decrepid, and needed much careful treatment and nursing; that year by

year they got younger, till finally they became children.

I asked the doctor if the world knew of this wonderful island? If *anybody* would grow young by living here? And what benefit might the world derive from the knowledge and study of this phenomenon? And why it was called Nesco island? He said, "I myself had been probably the first to tell the rest of the world anything about Vetulia; and as to its outlying Islands, they were, he supposed, quite unknown abroad. That only a native could expect really to grow young, though the air was remarkably sweet and pure (as I had already noticed), and anyone might hope to *remain* young longer than elsewhere. That the principal use the world at large could make of the phenomenon was a *moral* one, and that the name of the island was properly *Juvenesco Island*, but by usage and on the charts abbreviated to *Nesco*."

We were seated on a hill, overlooking the beautiful harbor where our yacht was anchored. The indescribable something was in the air that whispers of spring, and blossoms in the woods, and days growing longer and brighter, and birds, and flowers, and happiness! And here it lasted all the year! I was fairly entranced. The doctor noticed it and smiled.

"Yes," said he, "it is like the poet you were quoting the other day—what is his name? who says,

"All save the spirit of man is divine."

"To this island legislators and instructors of youth often come, to study the moral problems

here to be elucidated. For here, you must understand, the man is father to the boy ; just as with you the boy is father to the man. With you as with us in Vetulia, a good boy, thoughtful and pure, intelligent and kind, grows up to be an estimable man—a blessing to the race ; and a stubborn, wrong-headed, disobedient boy, grows to be a man of passion and brute impulses. And you and I can tell, as we look around us, what kind of men our young companions will be, by seeing what kind of children they are. Well, here, we can tell what kind of a man a boy has been, by seeing what kind of a boy he is now ! And sometimes a Vetulian boy, brought over here a few days by his parents, returns a changed and reformed boy. For he sees boys just like himself in every particular, and learns from the neighbors just what kind of men they were twenty or thirty years ago, and takes warning ! There ! there ! Look at that boy now ! ”

I looked in the direction he pointed, and there below us on the strand was a boy throwing stones at an old man hobbling with a stick. One stone struck him on the ankle, and brought the old man to the ground. We could bear it no longer, but hastened to the rescue, shouting as we went. Before, however, we could descend the deep slope on the top of which we had been seated, the boy was arrested by a constable, and he was cursing and fuming, as the officer held him tightly by the arm.

“That boy” said my friend, “I knew when he was a man. I was then but a boy myself. He

was a notorious criminal. He was convicted at different times, of perjury, arson and piracy, and served more than one term in the 'penitentiary,' so called, though in his case the name served a grim joke. The bad man, you see, makes the bad boy. I wish all our bad boys could see this one ; for, as surely as we can trace this boy's history in the past, from bad manhood, to bad boyhood, so we can trace their history in the future, from bad boyhood to bad manhood. It is a repulsive but salutary mirror for our youth."

As the boy was led away to a magistrate first, and then I suppose to some "reformatory," we continued the subject—after seeing that the old man was properly cared for ; the doctor said there would be no permanent injury. I remarked that it seemed to me that the memory of what these children had been, would greatly influence the treatment people gave them now. "So it does," said the doctor, "In this instance, for example, I could have no respect for this boy, knowing him to have been a cut-throat and pirate in his manhood. Our boys are better off in this respect, for we always hope they will be better as men than they have been as boys ; and we cannot convict them on a prevision of their unworthiness."

I thought here was a lesson the rest of the world might well ponder. And if I could not bring the bad boys of Nesco, to show them in their proper persons as warnings to our youth, I might at least bring back with me the report of them : which, with a little sound thought and a very little logic added, might be a good lesson and point to a good moral.

Our conversation had just turned on the interesting (and to men, the little understood) subject of female character and habits, when there passed us a pert little miss, fluttering with ribands, and wielding her fan in that deftly-fascinating way affected by certain fashionable ladies. "Now," said Dr. Oko, "can you guess what kind of a woman that has been?" I said I would not try guessing; but I should judge she must have been a leader of fashion in her day; and was, no doubt, showing us the juvenile ending of a wasted life. "You are right in the main," said the doctor: "she *was* a leader of fashion; broke the hearts of two honest fellows, who were in turn, fools enough to fall in love with her pretty face; jilted her affianced bridegroom; outlived all her friendships; became a by-word for feminine treachery; and more sour and sharp in her temper day by day, as her friends left her. Yes, there she goes! the heartless old maid of former days, with all her sham delicacy, prudery, pride and treachery about her!"

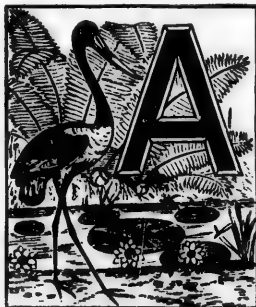
The doctor could not have spoken stronger if he had been one of her victims. And I never could find out the reason of his severity; for on other occasions I heard him speak in the most glowing terms of the unselfishness and true-heartedness of many old maids of his acquaintance. But no man can quite understand his own heart, and I suppose much less another's. But as we followed down the street this mincing remainder of former power, I could not help saying to myself, how surely does pertness, and forwardness, and undutifulness, on

the part of a *girl*, point to frivolity, heartlessness and deserved contempt, in the lot of the man ! To be respected, one must *deserve* respect, and to deserve respect, one must begin to deserve it young !

The old gentleman I knew (he is now passed away), was not far wrong, who thought, if he could only get a few more to join him, and put their means together—and if the race would but hear them—they could soon renovate the world ! He would have little tractates printed in every language, setting forth that if *parents* would only train their children up in virtue, in twenty years this earth would be a happy world ! The actual attempt would have shown—not the want of zeal or truth in the teachers—but want of receptiveness on the part of the wished-for scholars : for many moral teachers have been inculcating the same lesson, age after age ; and, true as the lesson may be, it is not learned yet !

CHAPTER VI.

GO TO LIMBO-LEE—COURT OF "JUSTIFICATION"
 EVERY MAN MUST "JUSTIFY" HIS CALLING—
 THE IDLERS—THE MISERS.



AFTER spending a few pleasant and profitable days on Nesco Island, we sailed with a light wind and a bright sun to another Island, the shore of which we could just distinguish on the horizon to the westward. It was called "Limbo-lee Island," and was the great Penal Settlement of Vetulia. At the time I arrived at Vetulia, I had heard, along with other gossip of the day, that the great "Court of Justification" had just been held; but I paid little attention to it, and failed to make enquiry on the subject. Now, however, I learned all about it. Once in seven years, on an appointed day (or rather days, for it lasts a week or more), every man over twenty-two, and every woman doing business for herself, must come before the Court to "justify." Those who have *justified* before and have not in any material way changed their profession or life, are passed in quick succession, and are again *justified*. But these who come before the court for the first time, are very strictly and impartially dealt with. The

"principle" long ago passed in Parliament was, "Every man's life should be of some benefit to the State." And this was made the foundation of the official scrutiny. When, for instance, a carpenter, mason, tailor or blacksmith came before the Court, he could easily show his occupation to be beneficial to the public; and was then *justified* for seven years. And although hundreds of such cases passed in somewhat rapid review before the Court, the judges would not allow it to be assumed that they knew anything about any occupation brought before them; but compelled the "examined" to state the matter in the best way he could, or to supplement his statement (if it were somewhat deficient), by the evidence and opinion of his neighbors. A certain class, who manufactured mere articles of luxury, or dealt exclusively in such, had always more trouble to pass the Court; but generally managed to do so, on the ground that beauty was allowable, and that beauty is itself utility. But I was assured that the makers and vendors of ale and liquors had always been unable to show that their business was in anywise of "benefit to the State." Physicians educated in the days of a former dynasty, would be brought forward to testify to the "strength-giving" properties of their "ales," and the like, but for many years, these pleas had failed before the Court. The raggedness, wretchedness, poverty, disease and suicides, directly traceable to this business (and always on distinct evidence—nothing taken for granted), were sure to condemn people thus engaged. To such persons, the separ-

ate evidence demanded in each case, was the worst of all ! It did not so much hurt the feelings of a great brewer, or a "respectable" hotel keeper, to be condemned on the general principle, that such a business was "hurtful to the State," as to have poverty-stricken wives and orphan children come forward and testify, that *this* man's beer, or *that* man's public-house, was the direct cause of their wretchedness. Or worse still, when some criminal was brought from the prisons, to testify that his first and last lessons in crime were learned in drinking society, from men who were first tipplers and then criminals, made tipplers and drunkards at the public house of such-and-such. Drink cases before the Court had, however, almost become things of the past. Of course, all the brotherhood of sharpers and the like were very summarily dealt with. The only trouble was in catching them ; for they were very expert in keeping out of the way, when it came near Court time.

All men who could not "justify" before the Court were banished to "Limbo-lee," till the holding of the next Court ; that is for seven years. Then, if they had so reformed that they thought they stood a good chance of being "justified," they might stand before the Court again. My friend the doctor told me that not only had the action of this Court a most beneficial effect in lopping off excretions from the body politic, but had also a certain excellent effect in determining a young man's choice of an occupation or profession ; and that on high and right principles. For he was led to ask himself, at the very outset, "Is this business conducive

to the welfare of the State?" And an honest answer to such a question, could scarcely be otherwise than good for the young man himself.

"And are the people," I asked, "banished to this Island, restrained of their liberty in any way? are they—as in our penal settlements—made to work, and kept as prisoners?"

"Not at all," replied the Doctor, "they have all the liberty they ever had, except that they must not leave the Island. A considerable force is kept on the Island (which is the only military establishment the Vetulians find need for), to keep them in order. But the fact of their misdeeds being known, and the comparatively small number of the general public here, on whom to practice their arts (for they cannot live on one another), compel them to change their life. And I am glad, for the credit of humanity, to say, that a large number of them do really reform; and are able to get back again, in seven or fourteen years, to their homes. You will perhaps doubt it—but the worse class to manage, even more so than the criminals, are the *idlers*; and the very worst of all this class, are the high-class, well-bred idlers. It is so extremely difficult to 'break them in' to any kind of work! They will beg first—almost die first. And they actually do go round the Island begging for years before they will take to any useful employment. But, once they are reformed, they make a very valuable class of citizens."

The principal town was called Experiment. And here we staid for five days, much interested in everything we saw. It happened, fortunately

for our investigations, that only a few weeks previously, the septennial batch of *unjustified* ones had arrived from the mainland of Vetulia ; and of course we were just in time to know how they were disposed of. The country boys, who had been lured into bad company and crime in the cities, were taken out to the Model Farm ; and by easy steps induced to work at remunerative and honest employment. They were not, however, expected to work more than four hours a day for the first month, for it takes a little while for the muscles to harden ; and too sudden an experiment of steady work is very discouraging.

Some brewers and distillers were making fortunes in sugar manufactories and refineries ; one of which was a "beet-root" establishment. And they actually looked in better health and sounder flesh than they could ever have done before. Hotel keepers made excellent purveyors for the many public institutions of the Island. And though many of them shrank in bulk, none of them lost in health. The great army of sharpers contributed many useful members to the constabulary and railway departments. A noted phrenologist was stationed here by the Government, to advise men who were willing to make the best use of their powers. It was surprising here, as elsewhere, how many men had mistaken their vocations. Nature had shaped them in one particular fashion, and they had twisted themselves in some other fashion, and never seemed to find it out. Here, they could get such advice as a high-class phrenologist could give them ; and

often benefited themselves much in following his suggestions.

The Court of Justification had no authority in Limbo-lee; for it was considered a penal settlement, and the most part of the inhabitants were enforced immigrants. Anyone could ask leave to go to Vetulia to stand before the Court; but the Court could not summon him. This leave was always given, if the application did not seem altogether absurd; for sometimes the most unreformed and unreformable characters would take the notion to "try their chance" once more before the Court. And a *second* adverse decree was accompanied by some restrictions, which did not apply to the first.


The Misers interested me more, and amused me more than any other single class. It seemed so perfectly outrageous to them, that *they* should be banished. It was true that they could not get the Court to look at them as they looked at themselves; and failed to convince the Court that their "business" was for the benefit of the public. "But then"—they would want to know—"can a man not do what he likes with his own? Has a man got to be a spend-thrift, whether he chooses or not? Are there not a whole *Island full* of such characters already in *Limbo-lee*? Can't a man husband his resources, and even make them larger if he chooses, without having the law down on him? It was too bad!" So they argued, but all in vain. They were allowed to take one-fifth of their wealth with them. The remainder was put out at interest, and the interest given to charita-

ble institutions. If the man reformed, and was *justified* before the Court, he received his money back again—that is, the principal. The interest was already spent by the Government.

These men established in Limbo-lee a joint-stock monetary institution, for lending out money at fifteen *per cent*. As nobody would borrow money on those terms, they had to become borrowers themselves. And as the high interest paid in, and the high dividends drawn out, as nearly as possible balanced each other, they got no increase of wealth from it; though it caused them to “handle money”;—which of itself was, no doubt, a great source of pleasure to them. It does not take much in the way of sport, to please a boy; and it does not take much, in the way of *money*, to please a miser!

CHAPTER VII.

THE GIANTS OF THE TROPICS—WARS—DIPLOMACY
—ALWAYS ONE WAY OF DOING A THING.

N the history of Vetulia, there was nothing that interested me more, than the records of the wars with the giants of the Tropics. The clay in the make-up of most men—like much of our clay in Ontario—is full of little explosive bits of limestone, which kiln-burn it as you will, will “go off” sometime! And men who have not gone into the fight with wrongs in the body-politic, or imperfections in themselves, or with the thousand evils that annoy and degrade human nature—must perforce find something else, or somebody, to fight. And so—just as the British nation for centuries would fight the French; and the mere statement of the fact was supposed to justify it—the Vetulians had, in former ages, fought the giants of the Tropics: and no one seemed to think it his business to ask “why?”

Sam Patch, who finished his little career about the time I was born, but who was a great man with us boys at school, used to say, “Some things can be done as well as others.” But there are some things entirely outside of Sam Patch’s philosophy. A farmer can’t put four bushels of wheat into a two-bushel bag, nor a little soldier stand in

a close wrestle with a giant. The farmer must borrow another bag from a neighbor ; and the little soldier must get behind a breastwork, or trust to a long-range rifle. But it took the Vetulians a long time to learn all this. How they got to the war nobody knew nor cared : but in war they were, and they must go through with it. The giants were naturally peaceable ; did not attempt to invade Vetulia—nor indeed were they able to do so, for they possessed no fleet. But when the Vetulians invaded their country, the giants always managed in the end to repulse them. Probably William Tell would have made a very poor attempt at storming Vienna ; but he was impregnable at home. A Vetulian army successfully over-ran all the northern part of the giants' territory—where nobody lived ; but as soon as they came into the thickly-inhabited parts, a phalanx of the enemy just "walked through their crack regiments"—as one historian put it. And no improved ordnance, nor any inventions they could apply, would enable their men to stand before the terrible onset of a phalanx, fifty deep and forty broad, of men eight feet high, and weighing three hundred pounds ! They tried cavalry ; but the giants mounted too—and they were literally trampled into the earth, before these big fellows, mounted on horses eighteen and twenty hands high ! Then the Vetulians themselves obtained a number of the big horses, and formed a special corps. The horses were like the giants themselves—very peaceable, almost dull, at ordinary times ; but only to be ruled by a will stronger than their own when they got excited

The horses were as large and round as they were high; and no man could keep his seat astride a hogshead, if the hogshead had a neck and head (not to speak of a tail), and four legs, all going at once in obedience to some electric "motor" within! So the Vetulians rolled off their big horses, or were carried by them, *nolens volens*, into the enemy's camp. It would not do!

Then they relied on artillery. Their army was all "ordnance." If, instead of being within the Tropics, it had been within the Arctic Circle—and summer time—this might have done. But a park of artillery, however well-served, was no protection against the giants at night! They just made an irresistible rush in the dark—and though there was much wild firing—the giants were pitching the gunners "head-foremost over their own guns, before they knew what they were about!" So an eye-witness put it. Plainly, the giants could not be conquered.

Well, why not let them alone? The trouble was here: a desultory war had been going on for centuries; until it was said, every giant baby, before he was a month old, would instinctively shake his fist toward the north—just as it was reported in England, that every Scotch baby, if left to himself, would crawl toward the south! And it was gravely said in Vetulian cabinets, that to leave the giants alone till they became "civilized" enough to build a fleet of their own, was just to invite ruin and subjugation for Vetulia—for nothing known could stand before the giants. Something must be done! But what?

A "necessity" is a far more blessed thing than most people imagine! A large proportion of things that have done the world good have been born of it. It was in the text-books of Vetulian schools, that "if you think long enough on any subject you will get some light on it!" And "There is always some *one thing* a man can do; he is never absolutely without recourse!" The Premier of the day believed this, not because he had been taught it at school, but, having learned it at school, he had tested it, and weighed it, and found it true. The question was, "How to apply it in the case of the giants?"

A Vetulian philosopher came to the aid of the Government. "Oh, King!" he said to the monarch, "don't you know that every man in the world has some strong points, and some weak points? And it is by a man's using his strong points he becomes successful and great, and it is when he permits his weak points to be played upon by his enemy that he is overcome. The first thing toward conquering a man, is to find out his *weak point*! Now, in a giant, the weak point cannot be in his body; so you can neither overcome him by physical force, nor put him in terror in that respect. *Every man has his weak point*, and if it is not in his body, it must be in his *mind*. Now, my opinion is, we can overcome them by diplomacy. We have cultivated our minds for many generations (not having much bodily strength to cultivate); but not so the giants. They have prided themselves on their brute strength, and cultivated that, at the expense of their minds

The mind is the weak point with them. Now let us try treaty-making with them! It is in the historical archives of this land that nations have made themselves great by judicious treaties!"

And to the threadbare philosopher, with his thin, aquiline nose, and thin, long hair, the king listened; and he would have given him a nobility coat, and made him a Lord, but the philosopher would not have it; he said "his weak point was not in the direction of *clothes*." But the premier (who had been to Barker's, or some other shorthand school, when he was young), was diligently taking down the wise man's speech in cipher. And he determined to act on those lines. The giants were very bad for enemies, but they would be very good for friends. If the Vetulians had conquered them, it would have been but a barren conquest. The giants would still have been there, occupying the country as before; and no Vetulian would care to live where he was looked upon as a pigmy. And as for any possible *tribute*, that might be obtained in other ways; and "glory" would redound as much to him who established a lasting peace, as to him who obtained a decisive victory. When it came to that point the matter was soon settled. A treaty of Perpetual Peace was easily made. If ever Vetulia was attacked the giants would come to drive out the invaders. If ever the giants were attacked the Vetulian fleets would come to defend them. And between themselves, and forever, the rights of citizenship should be in common. (But with many particular, and some very curious, provisions).

At once there was prosperity in both countries ; the Vetulians could now spend their revenues in improvements, rather than wasting them on war. The giants could *work*, instead of playing "soldier." Soon they found their way to Vetulia, and placed their willing, strong arms, and docile dispositions, at the service of every kind-hearted householder. I found them everywhere. Like the Delacarlians, the unconquered freemen of the mountains you find on the streets of Swedish cities, these giants walked the streets of the Vetulian capital, feeling their freedom while they felt their strength. For a hundred years there had been peace ; and I was told that in a time of danger, should such arise, they would be the first to rally to the standard to defend the liberties of Vetulia. So much for wisdom and right-acting in respect to neighbors—whether of a nation, or of a family.

CHAPTER VIII.

INVENTORS REWARDED—FORCES OF NATURE UTIL-
 IZED—SUNBEAMS AS A MOTIVE POWER—COUNTRY
 BENEFITED—STREET RAILWAYS A BLESSING.



INDLING with the thought that I would "invent something," I often, when I was young, made the trial. But like the school-boy over his "composition," who scratches his unkempt head, and asks everybody in despair, "What shall I write about?" so my great trouble was, "What to invent?" The fit went off as such fits generally do with most people, and left nothing behind. I invented nothing! And I learned then, that mechanical invention was not my "forte." But with certain other men, it is entirely different. They will put into some kind of mechanical shape whatever is circulating in their brain, and copy and steal all they can of the product of other men's brains; and thus a double-headed problem arises: "How shall we reward the inventors for all their good inventions?" and "How shall we protect the public in the matter of being at liberty to use freely human inventions;

which are, *per se*, the property of the human race?" We have answered the first query pretty thoroughly, and given the inventors all they ask, and oft-times far more than they deserve; and yet they are not satisfied; and no wonder. For what benefit is a "patent-right," for so many years, to a man out-at-elbows with poverty? And yet, no sooner is some little article of household use improved, than an "inventor" gets hold of it, whether he really invented it or not, and we are prevented (except on *his* terms!) for making or using it!

These things seemed to have troubled the practical statesmen of Vetulia; and the nearest approach to perfection in the laws they could make, was to reward good inventions, and turn them over to the people (as the French did with Dr. Daguerre and his sun-pictures), to use as they would. To be sure, useless inventions were sometimes rewarded; for some showy inventions and discoveries, as we ourselves have often seen, come to nothing at last. But where the system of rewards was somewhat impartially carried out—as it was in Vetulia—the inventor had an income; enough to keep him from starvation (for most of them were poor), while he invented something better. At the end of seven years, if the invention had proved to be a valuable one, an additional "reward" was given. The Parliamentary "principle" was, "Forces of Nature should be employed for man's benefit." Thus, an inventor who utilized those forces or qualities, in any useful direction, was held to have carried out the law, and could demand a reward for it; for I found to

my surprise, that although no Jeremy Bentham had ever lived in Vetulia, they quite believed it was better, cheaper, juster and more politic, to give rewards than to mete out punishments. They did both, as occasion seemed to demand. But, precisely as a military commander is held to be a good and successful officer, largely in proportion as he holds sway over his men, without having to resort to military punishment, so a Government was estimated here; that was "best" which needed to punish least.

Not only was the principle that the forces of nature should be employed for man's "benefit," true in itself, but it was suggestive, and an incentive to the ingenious. A boy could scarcely have that in his school book, from earliest childhood without often thinking about it, or often wishing, like Burns—

"That I, for puir auld Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang, at least!"

The suggestion that the forces of nature should be used by man, had turned attention to electricity, gravitation, the tides, the winds and solar heat. In each of these directions, more or less of progress had been made. By an ingenious arrangement of wire ropes, and pulleys, and springs, the gravitation of descending railway trains on long grades was made to keep mills going. A heavy train gave very much more power than was needed; but the extra power was stored up in a series of immense coil-springs, which slowly un-

wound themselves till the next descending train was due. The gravitation of descending water in cascades (which were mostly found in the wild parts of the country), was made use of at great distances through copper wires, transmitting electricity, the power being generated at the various waterfalls in the mountains. In every harbor the tides were made use of in driving mills, by means of great flat boats, sometimes half an acre in superficial area, and which were lifted ten to twenty feet with every flow, and fell as much with every ebb, the "boat" thus lifting or depressing the short end of an immense lever, the other end of which communicated with the machinery.

As with us, they found the wind a very cheap power—but with the disadvantage of being very unsteady and unreliable. It was not, therefore, used in direct connection with machinery, but employed in tracking up loaded cars to the top of an inclined plane, from which their descending force would drive machinery; or in coiling up springs, to be unwound as needed, for the same purpose.

But the great triumph of Vetulian genius was in utilizing sunbeams. I made them laugh by telling them of Dean Swift's conceit of solemn professors spending their time in "extracting sunbeams from cucumbers." They said they did better in Vetulia; they produced cucumbers, and many other things, by means of sunbeams. Enormous "reflectors" took the place of furnaces for steam and hot air engines. And while a part of the power might be used at the time, the rest of

it was stored up at the top of inclined planes, or in coils, or as "stored electricity," to be used when the sun did not shine. It was also transmitted in tubes or wires to a distance.

I asked a learned professor if the country was better and the people happier for all this machinery and manufacture. He said he would answer me; and turning to a typewriting machine, he slowly spun off what seemed like a half-column of "proof" in a newspaper office, and handed it to me. I transcribe it as I received it:

"Communities are like individual men, and are swayed by the same impulses and passions. We ask a man whether he is better and happier in the somewhat artificial life he leads in society than when he was a boy, and lived a free life in the fields of the country? His answer is that he is no happier now than when a boy; nay, he is inclined to think as he looks back through the halo time has cast around his vanished youth, he was happier *then*. But he would not exchange situations, and be a boy again! The world wants men as well as boys.—even in the interests of the boys themselves. If there were no intelligent and famous manhood to look up to, boyhood would lose most of its charm and happiness. If all were boys, and always remained boys, the intellect would dwindle. And our friend is right. I myself can remember, at the age of four, when I first learned of my father that *boys* grew to be *men* (he would have told me before if he had known my ignorance on that important point). I only then began to wake up. I had now something in the future to live for.

And thus it is with a nation. A people merely agricultural or pastoral, however happy they may seem to be, have nothing to spur them on. And there are always people who are not suited for rural life. These would be merely dispirited drones. And in a commercial, manufacturing, artistic and learned nation, the position of those who choose to be agriculturists is far better than elsewhere. They have far more to cheer them and encourage them. They don't know how much those well-filled *book-shelves*, and those numerous household inventions they use, contribute to the rural happiness they boast of! No, we could not go back; and take it all in all the nation is happier that the minds of the people, as well as their bodies, are kept well employed."

This learned professor was himself in the possession of a very handsome pension from the government for having introduced "street railways" in the cities. He said he did not deserve it. He had not *invented* street railways. They were but the old "tramways"—the original of modern railways; and the only novelty was in re-introducing them. And he said at first there was a good deal of opposition. The streets had not been laid out wide enough to make them comfortable. New streets were now, of course, laid out wider. But the benefits had been gradually seen. A working man could now buy a site and build a cottage, three or four miles from his work, and could very well afford to pay a quarter or two per week to be carried back and forward with the street cars. Cities could now extend in every direction, instead

of becoming more and more crowded in the centre. The population was more healthy, both physically and morally, to be distributed in the ever-extending suburbs. These things had gradually become apparent as years went on, and his advocacy of street railways, much to his own surprise, had been officially reported on, and he was now in possession of the pension he had named. "And this," he added, "is a sample of what is continually taking place. The most unexpected rewards sometimes reach men, even in the most obscure situations. It has become a custom with us, for a man to register any invention he does not succeed in getting a reward for; and often, in after years, his registration (which gives him no patent right, however—merely perpetuates his *claim*) is the source from whence arise these postponed and unexpected, but sometimes most welcome, *rewards*."

A principle was in operation here, I have since recommended to our own people though with indifferent success, that is for young men to fit themselves for any special position they desire, in faith that the position will come to them! The world is always searching for capable men. The trouble is young men strive for a "position," instead of making themselves capable of it! I found in Vetulia professors, engineers, and experts in all sciences, who had been taken out of the densest social obscurity, because they were discovered to have qualified themselves in some branch of human knowledge.

CHAPTER IX.

MAGISTRATES "APPOINTED"—HIGH-COURT JUDGES
 "ELECTED"—HOARDING OF MONEY—HOARDING
 OF LAND—WIVES EQUAL PARTNERS—INHERIT-
 ANCES TAXED—THE QUINQUENNIAL ASSESSMENT
 LAW.



ONE of the *principles* long ago passed, was, "That no one can be a judge in his own case." In the gradual working out of this *principle*, great changes were made in the way of selecting and appointing judges. Anciently, all judges and justices of the peace were appointed by the Crown, but a democratic streak generally extended over the political sky of the country; and after a time, as Vetulian history shows, all these officers were elected by the people. But some time after, and as more perfectly carrying out the spirit of the *principle*, it was settled that the magistrates and inferior judges, who have to deal with cases immediately around them, —man with man, and neighbor with neighbor—

should *not* be elected by those neighbors, but be appointed by the Crown. And the judges of the various higher courts, who have often to decide on the constitutionality of Acts of Parliament, and cases between the Crown and the citizen, should not owe their position to the crown, (or, in other words, to the ministry of the day), but be elected by the people :—and for their legal “ lives ;” for it was considered intolerable that a judge should have any temptation before him of shaping his conduct on the bench to secure a re-election. And I was told that the justiciary enjoyed and deserved the highest reputation for probity and incorruptness.

A jury consisted of fifteen, and (as in Scotland) a majority could convict. And a neutral verdict might be given, which acquitted the person at the time, but did not prevent his being tried again if further evidence made this desirable. In criminal cases, the accused was invited to make his own statement before the Court, and could be questioned (by the Court only), on any part of his statement. An innocent man, as I thought I noticed, in a few times attending their criminal Courts, could make a good impression on the judge and jury, by a plain honest statement of the facts. And, to the jury especially, this provision seemed to be a very welcome one ; for they began at once to see into the “ outs and ins ” of the question ; instead of being, as I have elsewhere seen, troubled for half a day to find out what were the circumstances surrounding the alleged crime. If a man refused to make any statement before the Court, it was looked upon as the action

of a criminal who feared to speak lest he should point to his own guilt. Of course, I was prejudiced in favor of the British *dictum*, that every man is to be considered innocent, till he "is proved guilty." But the Vetulian jurists contended that their axiom was better, that "The law is neither to presume a man innocent nor guilty; but accepts the facts as they come out in evidence." The jury had almost complete control of the sentence. Murder was either in first or second degree. The first involved capital punishment; the second did not. If the verdict was unanimous, the full penalty, whatever it was, was inflicted. If two-thirds of a jury were for conviction, a two-third penalty succeeded. If a jury stood eight to seven, the case was left in the hands of the judge and the two magistrates who acted as associate judges.

The almost world-wide principle, that "a man has a right to be tried by his equals," was very strictly carried out here. A dweller in the country could not be tried by a city judge; nor a business man be compelled to plead before a jury of farmers. There were in all, six classes of juries recognized by the law. I exclaimed against the intolerable expense attending so many jurymen, but I was told that they received no allowances whatever; and that there was so little crime and quarrelling in the country, there was not much to do. Seldom more than two kinds of jurymen were summoned; thirty of each: and they considered it a kind of "holiday" to attend Court for two or three days.

At one time hoarding of money had become a

great public grievance, and so it was abated. For once I had the satisfaction of telling the public men of Vetulia, that they had followed British practice, to remedy an evil when it became a grievance—overlooking it as long as it was merely an anomaly. They admitted the fact, but would not admit the principle.

So many stocking-legs full of gold and silver had been hidden away, that business became seriously affected. Midnight robberies were frequent; and no money was in circulation but paper. "Shinplasters" and "Greenbacks" were as plentiful as in the United States during the Civil War, and about as many counterfeits on the former euphoniously-named tokens for money, as in the great Republic. The crisis was precipitated when one old government official, whose duty it was to sign these issues of paper, "went on strike." He said he had signed his name eight thousand times a day, for six days in the week, and fifty-two weeks in the year; and thus put through his hands, two millions and a half (only allowing himself half a day for "holiday") in the year. That he was worn out and could do it no longer. That if he invented a *die*, ever so cunningly fashioned, to *stamp* his name, the rogues would be sure to imitate it. And that if the Premier would have paper-money any more, "he must just dress the rag-baby himself!"

As it was known the Mint was active, and there must be an immense amount of coin in the country somewhere, a "principle" was passed against hoarding; containing the reasons on which it was condemned: and a specific Act was levelled against the *stocking-legs*. A few confiscations were made,

and sundry old misers banished "to the Island." A few others were "defeoed" some years sooner than they expected, and the evil was in time abated. A radical-minded Judge, bent on carrying out the *principle* against hoarding to its legitimate conclusions, ordered the confiscation of the lands of a nobleman. The country was dreadfully excited. No such thing had been heard of for many generations; indeed, since the country had enjoyed a settled government. The case was appealed to Parliament, and debated for a whole session. But the "principle" that "hoarding was against public policy," could not be set aside by any argument. The dictum was a sound one, and this man was guilty of "hoarding." It was proved that this person bought up all the land that was offered for sale in his part of the country, irrespective of price. That he never sold any of his property. That he already possessed the lands of thirty-five former proprietors. That in every essential respect he was guilty of hoarding up land, just as others had been guilty of hoarding up specie. And that it was against public policy that anyone should absolutely withdraw from circulation and from open market, either great amounts of money or of land, and make no use of them, but to keep them. To the answer that "the lands were rented out, and so were made use of," it was rejoined, "that they were acquired in *fee simple*," only by "forestalling the market," which was illegal. That if the same man were to send his agents into all the towns around, to buy up at any price necessary to secure it, all the bread offered for sale in these towns, in the same way as he sends them out to secure land,

all men would see at once where the offence lay ; and that a man who had money to buy land, ought to find a possibility of doing so. But now they were prevented from obtaining land, just as they would be prevented from obtaining bread."

In the end, the sentence was confirmed in respect of all the lands he had acquired in his own lifetime. And a sweeping "land law" was passed. A former "principle" that "no *dead man* has power!" had already made an end of entail, which rested entirely on some dead man's *dictum* : (for a "defeoffed" man was legally dead).

And now primogeniture was abolished : except only that personal honors held by a father, might descend to his eldest son. A wife was, by virtue of her relation to her husband, an equal partner in all his real and personal estate. As in French law, a man and his wife were a "community," a *firm*. In such case, no "marriage settlement" was needed ; as her half of all his property was her "settlement" by law, of which she could not be deprived, except by her own seal and signature in the presence of the Judge. It was further enacted that no person could inherit, during his legal lifetime, more than five thousand acres of land. All real personal estate went to the children in equal proportions. And if a man wished his son to have more than five thousand acres, he must give him the land by *deed*, during his own legal lifetime. These provisions gradually put an end to the aggregation of land in the hands of one family, to the exclusion of others who were willing to purchase at a fair price. Land became, after a time, like any other commodity in a free market.

CHAPTER IX.—*Continued.*

ET there were still many confiscations. Men *would* sometimes hold on to their lands, and have more than 5,000 acres apiece, when divided, to their children. The surplus was confiscated to the Crown and sold. It was offered in small farms, by "tender." A man without land, had ten *per cent.* added to his tender : and for every ancestor he supported two *per cent.* more. So that his tender counted, in competition, more than its face-value ; though he only had to pay (and that in exceedingly easy instalments, as the security was good,) the original amount of the successful tender.

A "principle" long ago passed was, that "taxes should fall where they would be least felt." In pursuance of this, a law was passed, something like the original enactment of Julius Cæsar, that all property, in passing by gift or inheritance, should pay five *per cent.* to the Government. Strenuous opposition was made, I was told, by sons and natural heirs. It was held by them that it was all very well and very politic, to tax legatees who had come into prosperity or funds from friends or distant relatives : but to tax the sons of a man on the inheritance coming to them from their father, was oppressive and unjust.

To this it was replied, that there were properly

no "legatees" now ; for the making of a will was a misdemeanor at law, and if a man is not satisfied with the prospect of his property being equally divided among his children, he could give away what part of it if he choose, and to whom he choose (his wife consenting) during his legal lifetime, and that as the value of property greatly consisted in its being, as well as its possessor, under the protection of a stable and just Government, it was quite right the man should pay something for that protection which made the property valuable to him. The whole power of the Government was behind the man, to put him, and keep him in peaceful possession of the property—and that power exerted on his behalf (or what was the same thing, the dread of it), was worth far more than the one-twentieth of the price to him ! Besides, a man parting with one-twentieth of the value of what he had neither *bought* nor *earned*, was not very hardly dealt with after all !

And the objectors were reminded, that if they were in Parliament, and objected to this tax, they would be bound to put on the journals of the House a "better plan," and they were asked "what it would be?" But before the time of my visit, the opposition had dwindled away ; and this most equitable tax went far toward supporting all the expenses of the Government. The other taxes were mainly municipal burdens ; and very light.

Another well-known and popular "principle" was that "Industry should be encouraged." A Protectionist party in the country tried very hard

to develop from this "Principle," a high and protective tariff, and they really managed to get "Protection" into force; under an erroneous assumption that it "encouraged Industry." But after being several years debated in Parliament, it had come to be understood that "Protection" only built up one set of industries by taxing all others. "Protection" had thus been fairly tested, and was found to foster selfishness in the nation; and had been repealed before my visit.

The municipalities had been in the way of granting "bonusses" to industrial works, started within their bounds. At other times they would give those exemption from municipal taxes for a number of years. But both these aids were objected to by many tax-payers, on the reasonable ground that old-established "industries" deserved to be helped, as much as new ones; and that other citizens deserved well of their town, who had made "improvements," but were not engaged in *industries*, so called. The matter finally came before Parliament; for the municipalities were seen not to have power to do what was theoretically best in the premises. The result was that the *principle*, "Industry should be encouraged," found one practical development in the "Quinquennial Assessment Law."

This proceeded on the assumption that every man who put his money into buildings in a town, or otherwise improved it, should be "encouraged" and rewarded for so doing. It was quite right in itself—so they argued—that a man putting up a great mill or factory, should not be taxed on it for

a few years, till he began to have a steady income from it. But then the man who had put up a block of nice houses, and so improved his town, was just as deserving of exemption as the other.

The new law met both cases. It was enacted that the assessed "value" of property should remain unaltered for five years ; the annual assessment only taking notice of changes in ownership, and subdivisions of property ; and the like. Then a man, building soon after the quinquennial period, would have three or four years to enjoy his house or work his mill, before he would be *finéd* (for so it seemed, under the old system), for his enterprise ! Of course there are always croakers ; and some thought this law would create, artificially, recurring periods of briskness and depression, at or between the quinquennial assessments. The result proved that these fears were groundless. It was true that many more private houses and mills were put up during the first two years, than the last three of these recurring periods, but the last part of the term was always chosen for the erection of public buildings in the large cities, and for the principal prosecution of Government works. And thus while "Industry" was encouraged by a temporary exemption from taxation, the country at large was nowise injured in its business.

CHAPTER X.

VETULIAN LITERATURE — PROVERBS — NOBILITY
 COATS—REFORM IN FASHIONS—CHURCH AND
 STATE—HIRING DOCTORS BY THE YEAR—
 ESCAPE HOME.



FEELING inclined, after so strong a dose of political economy, and so much of it contrary to all my former feelings and prejudices, to have a little relaxation, I spent a few of days in the public libraries and literary institutions of the City of Vetulia. I found every facility for pursuing my investigations in this pleasant department of knowledge.

No one here was allowed to write for a magazine till he had written for the newspapers; and no one was allowed to publish a book till he had first published a pamphlet; and no one was allowed to publish a work in two or more volumes till he had first issued some work in a single volume. I thought these regulations very depressing to genius. My self-constituted instructors admitted all that; but they said they cared little for genius in Vetulia; it was application and perseverance that deserved to be encouraged! What they chiefly prided themselves upon was their pe-

culiar form of verse. Whereas we end our lines with a jingle—each like some other in its terminating sound—they *began* their's with the same sound! I could detect no pleasant rhythm in it—but they said *they* could! I tried to sing it, to play it, to declaim it; but all in vain, as to getting any music out of it! But some of their popular novelists professed to find in it the most perfect musical cadence. I transcribe the opening lines of one of their most popular patriotic songs, as a specimen of this strange Vetulian verse:—

Morn, lovely it dwells on the hills;—
 Corn, greenly it grows in the vales;
 Sweet comes the low carol of birds,
 Fleet o'er the far fields is the breeze;
 Red rise the bright rays of the sun,
 Fled all the grim shadows of night;
 Song, still let me hear from thy lips—
 Long, long shall the cadence be mine!

I could never make out any melody in the native music of the Red Indians, nor quite comprehend the strange fact that the Greeks did not know rhyme, nor ever stumbled into it! But, after hearing Vetulian music, and reading Vetulian poetry, I have quite made up my mind that taste is only custom and use, and poetry is but a name for certain compositions with a capital letter at the beginning of each measured line, "only that, and nothing more."

Their fashion of issuing Parliamentary "principles" probably had an influence on their literature, for their libraries were peculiarly rich in collections of proverbs; and their *literati* were

continually inventing more. A great desire seemed to exist to present truth, or what the writer choose to consider truth, in as concise a form as possible. I tried to convince them that this was a sign of a nation's childhood ; that as literature gathered strength, and education became universal, it was less necessary for a people to have morals, political and social economy in proverbial sentences—they could digest it all in more elaborate shape. But I failed to make any converts to my views. They had always—so they said—cultivated and valued proverbs, and they did so now. But of all things in the world, there is the least variety in *proverbs*. A certain set of moral principles, born in the conscience—a certain round of facts, gathered from universal experience, these continually recur, dressed in the particular style of thought and language peculiar to the age and people. Ecclesiasticus is but Ecclesiastes imitated, and Tupper is but Solomon going about in a dress coat and stovepipe hat ; and a “provyerb” in broad Scotch, is the same in good English or provincial Spanish. I find in my notes the following, as somewhat approaching originality, among the Vetulian “saws” :—

1. “The apple tree worships the sun.” (I found they had the same prevailing south west winds as we ; and their orchards, like ours, all bent eastward.)

2. “Who plows well loves the plow !”

3. “The hollow basswood bears big leaves !”

4. “Rain makes grass, but it needs the sun to make hay !”

5. "The boy who reads at noon will not ruin at night!"

6. "A bush road and a Christian, should always be getting better."

7. "A house unfurnished is but half built."

8. "'One stick at a time,' said the sensible young bride, and the equally sensible crow."

9. "He who would think, must talk; if it were only to himself."

10. "Train very carefully the young horse, and the young boy who loves horses."

11. "The open fire-place glows in the maiden's cheek."

12. "Frost is a good road maker; but he only works when he pleases."

13. "You may bend a straight stick when you can't straighten a crooked one."

This "baker's dozen" of Vetulian saws I selected, without any great care in making the selection, from various authors, and, after all, it just proves my contention that proverbs are much the same in all ages and countries.

Their creation and maintenance of a nobility was a new subject for my consideration. I asked them, why, with their principle of going to the bottom of things, they had a nobility at all? Were not men—not with respect to strength of mind or opportunities of culture, but with privileges and rights—all born free and equal? They said, "Yes, yes, yes! But then, all men loved titles and dignities: this was just as natural for men as for women to love finery! And if this craving were not gratified in one way, it would be

in another ; and it was more politic for the government to provide honors and titles, than men to invent them for themselves in the countless societies and orders which are in so many civilized countries ; the ambition of the vain and the laughing-stock of the wise."

When a man, with them, was made a nobleman, he was simply given a "nobility coat," with the badge of his "order" on it. Whenever he wore that coat (and only then), he was a "nobleman," and entitled to recognition as such ; when he had "off his coat" he was simply "a gentleman." Exactly like our military officers ; who don't expect to be saluted by their soldiers when going about in a frieze coat and a billycock hat. These, when presented to their Sovereign, must wear the uniform of their rank and service ; but when in plain clothes, they are, in a military sense, "nobody."

I found the Vetulian nobles very careful of their *coats*. All kinds of inventions were sought, to keep out moths, and prevent decay of these precious garments. For when a man's coat could no longer be worn, he ceased to be recognized as a nobleman. Some years ago, at the graduation of medical students at Toronto University, a student came up to receive his diploma, in a "gown" which consisted only of the "yoke" and one sleeve. A piece of hempen twine went over the other shoulder and held the thing together. He was determined to make the regulation *gown* last till the end. "He was not going to the expense of a new gown to graduate in!" I have some-

times thought this student must have been at Vetulia, at some of the royal levees I attended. For there I saw nobles with old, faded, rotten "nobility coats" on, impossible to make hold together for another year. A far nobler coat was that found in the possession of a black, in the wilds of Africa, ten years after Livingstone's death. He was found carrying a European coat over his arm, and was asked where he got it? It was tattered and rotten by long exposure and carrying. "A white man gave me that ten years ago," said he. "Oh, he was a good man! He loved everybody, and loved the black man as if he was his brother!" And he had carried the good man's coat (to make it last the longer, only covering himself with it, perhaps, at night—and who can tell the *influence* that constant reminder carried on his arm would have on that poor African's character and life. We cannot bear a budget of roses without carrying the aroma with us.

The nobility coats were not allowed to be patched. To wear a patched coat was only one degree removed from the infamy of having a "patched character." Some boldly assumed the court-dress of a commoner and left their tatters at home and dropped the "handle" to their names. Others, no matter who laughed, stuck to their coats of nobility.

The Prime Minister (who, by the way, had declined a nobleman's coat and dressed as a commoner), explained it to me thus. He said men were ennobled because they deserved recognition

and honor by the nation. And when a man was given a *coat*, it was fit to last his legal lifetime, and point him out, as long as he was able to appear in public, as one his sovereign and his nation delighted to honor. But it did not follow that his son deserved the same honor. And so the original idea of the enactment was, that when the coat had been worn one lifetime—and had, in the proper sense of the word been worn out—its star and cross might be framed and hung up in the saloons of the great as a memento of what their ancestor was—and as an incentive to noble deeds among themselves—but not as really conveying any rank to those who had not achieved honors for themselves. And so, the *older* the coat the *less* respect was due to it; for it showed the wearer to be several generations away from the ancestor who had gained the honor. “I know,” said he, “That is reversing *your* idea of things. Your people think the older the coat the more honorable. *We* think, the newer the coat, the nearer we are to the heroism that gained it.”

Nothing pleased me more than the simple, yet most becoming drapery of the women. I looked in vain for a wasp-waist, or a street-sweeping skirt, or a too-revealing tight corsage, or a pair of horns upon the shoulders, or a dead bird upon the hat—in the whole city of Vetulia! Wishing to know if it had been always so, or what circumstances had brought it about, a Vetulian legislator informed me. He said it chiefly came from the treaty with the Giants of the Tropics, a century before. The treaty provided that in the two

countries there should be reciprocal citizenship, and that no one, otherwise qualified to vote, of more than twenty-four inches in girth, or wearing shoes of not less than "number four," should be debarred the franchise. This stipulation the giants insisted on; and though the Vetulian ambassadors were unmercifully laughed at for admitting so whimsical an article in a solemn treaty between two nations, it was soon forgotten by the public. Not so, some of the judges, before whom came some contested elections! They disqualified every voter who did not come up to this physical standard. And, as just at this time, a celebrated lady reformer was running for Parliament in the capital, the small shoes and the small waists among the female voters began at once to disappear. Every virtue helps every other virtue; and one good reform helps on another. Once political necessity began to demand natural waists and natural feet, it was astonishing how people began to see ugliness and deformity in what before had been considered beauty. A determined fight was kept up for a while by a minority of the fashionable dressmakers, till—the Court of Justification coming on—a few of them were banished to "The Island." Then all was peace. And it began to be discovered, by those who most needed to make the discovery, that nature had from the first decreed (what the sculptors had long before discovered), that the girth of a well-proportioned and youthful female figure, is always as exactly as possible, two-fifths of the height. So that a woman of five feet would measure twenty-four inches—

and *could vote* ! But the Giants insisted at "drawing the line" there. With the shoemakers it made very little difference : the women wore fours, and fives, and sixes as before ! Only now fours were not sold as "large two-and-a-half," and sixes were not called "fours" when they were bought. And my friend said "the best of it all was the increased freshness and beauty of the women," as they themselves confessed.

Like other countries, Vetulia had been, in its earliest history, pagan. Indeed, it was believed that among some of the most helpless and attenuated of the old *Atomies*, were still surviving specificity had been "Established." But, as the people became more intelligent, and the Government got freer, a "Principle"—which did not seem at the time to have any connection with the "Establishment," and for which even the supporters of the State-church felt themselves compelled to vote—was passed, which declared, "A Government should know its subjects only *as* subjects and citizens, not as classes." Some reforming statesman took hold of this "Principle," and wrought it out in the direction, "That for the State to know certain people as forming a certain communion, and to give them privileges and support not given to others, is to know them as a *class*, and contravenes the *principle*." The Parliamentary Opposition wisely contented themselves with demonstrating the soundness of their position, and then waited for the sentiment of the country to ripen on the question. And it did ripen so fast, that the next Session the Ministry was compelled

to bring in a Bill to disestablish the State-church, and to throw religious worship and ordinances entirely into the hands of the people, only reserving to the Government the responsibility of protecting the religious privileges of every man who acknowledged one God. The rivalry of sects was much mitigated by this proceeding, and when I visited the country, nearly a century from the date of Disestablishment, three or four of the principal sects had practically amalgamated into one. They received and installed ministers interchangeably, and carried on their missionary operations in common.

I know not how many more interesting points of procedure, and legislative novelties I should have discovered on a longer acquaintance with this strange country, and wonderfully practical people, if my health had not given way. I employed a physician. He came in politely, and stated his terms per annum! "Per annum?" I gasped; "I don't want you for a year! I only want you for the fewest possible visits in which you can put me on my legs again." He informed me that the immemorial custom of the profession would not allow him to charge by the "visit," but only by the *year*; from which was, of course, deducted any odd weeks the patient was under his hands. I had to submit, but I could not long submit, for a Vetulian doctor (who never loses a patient by death), cares not how slow the cure may be; and has been known to go off on a three months' holi-

day in the most unhealthy part of the year, knowing that his patients would be there when he came back !

I was put through a three-weeks' sweat ; then a two-months' starvation time. Then I was promised seventy doses of some celebrated extract, done up in pills. After that, if I went on favorably, I was to go to 'Nesco Island for three months ; then return for twenty days' bathing and drenching at some spring up in the mountains ! I determined to leave the country, and trust the sea-air and my own private hygienie for my recovery. But I found that as the doctors were responsible for their patients, so the patients were by law completely in the hands of their medical attendants. As soon as you called in a physician you lost all power of self-control, legally, till you were better.

I hired a boy to lie in my bed, and to snore methodically whenever the door was approached (which he had locked inside), till I should be outside the harbor with the early land-breeze. I stole in the darkness to the ship, in which I had secured a passage, and in a very undistinguished way left the country. I afterwards heard that the members of the Cabinet had resolved to give a public dinner to the "distinguished barbarian who had visited their shores, and was so delighted to study their institutions." I was glad to get away, and I found that it was more what the Americans call "worry" than real sickness that was the matter with me. And once I was fairly clear of their shores, I had just enough of

"human nature" in me to dislike a country where everything is referred to first principles, and continually condemns me by its perfection! I did not want to live in a country where there was nothing left to reform! And I got home just in time to put an oar into an exciting general election. And it is at the solicitation of my central committee, at Little Netherwick, that I have put these sketches before the public. A celebrated politician remarked to me, that I "had probably learned more than ever I would be able to put in practice," which, I dare say, is true of myself, and Little Netherwick, as well as the great country of which it forms a part!



